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THE AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.

THE twenty-third congress of the American Ornithologists' Union convened in New York City, Monday evening, November 13. The business meeting of the fellows, and public sessions, November 14, 15 and 16, were held at the American Museum of Natural History. The final session, Thursday afternoon, was held at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences.

Charles F. Batchelder, of Cambridge, Mass., was elected president; E. W. Nelson, of Washington, D. C., and Frank M. Chapman, of New York City, vice-presidents; John H. Sage, of Portland, Conn., secretary; Jonathan Dwight, Jr., of New York City, treasurer; Ruthven Deane, A. K. Fisher, Thos. S. Roberts, Witmer Stone, William Dutcher, Chas. W. Richmond, and F. A. Lucas, members of the council.

The ex-presidents of the union, Drs. J. A. Allen and C. Hart Merriam, and Messrs. William Brewster, D. G. Elliot, Robert Ridgway and Chas. B. Cory, are *ex-officio* members of the council.

Drs. Allen, Dwight, Merriam and Richmond, and Messrs. Brewster, Ridgway and Stone, were reelected 'Committee on Classification and Nomenclature of North American Birds.'

Walter K. Fisher, of Palo Alto, Calif., Professor Lynds Jones, of Oberlin, Ohio, and Wilfred H. Osgood, of Washington, D. C., were elected fellows. Five associates, Dr. Chas. W. Townsend, John E. Thayer, Rev. Wm. Leon Dawson, James H. Riley and Austin H. Clark, were elected to the class known as members, and seventy-one new associates were elected.

Mr. Witmer Stone had found among the archives of the Philadelphia Academy of Sciences, some unpublished letters of Alexander Wilson, and the extracts read from them were of historic interest—showing the disadvantages under which this pioneer

ornithologist labored in his efforts to secure specimens.

A paper, which evoked much discussion, was read by Dr. J. A. Allen, on 'The Evolution of Species through Climatic Conditions.' He referred to certain geographic races described from the United States as illustrating the change of plumage and appearance of birds whose distribution covered a wide area.

Mr. Abbott H. Thayer, the eminent portrait painter, demonstrated his theory of the protective or disguising coloration of animals. Mr. Thayer has studied this subject from an artist's standpoint and believes 'that every animal which preys upon others or is preyed upon is an absolute picture of its environment at its time of greatest danger.' The elephant, he said, had no need of protective coloration.

Mr. C. Wm. Beebe, curator of birds at the New York Zoological Park, spoke of the collection under his charge and referred to many interesting experiments concerning feeding and surroundings, which he had been able to conduct in the park.

Dr. Thos. S. Roberts called attention to the great destruction of Lapland longspurs in southern Minnesota while migrating, March 13, 1904. A severe (moist) snow-storm occurred at the time and thousands of the birds were killed and injured by striking buildings, telegraph wires and the ice on different lakes. A conservative estimate of the number killed was 750,000, but he fully believes that 1,000,000 must have perished. Dr. Roberts illustrated his remarks with lantern slides, picturing the dead or injured birds as found in the snow in door-yards, parks and on various ponds. No other species appeared to be migrating with the longspurs.

During the sessions excellent lantern slides from photographs of birds in life were shown by Rev. H. K. Job, and Messrs. Chapman, Bowdish, Baily and Finley.

After a dinner at the Hotel Endicott, Tuesday evening, November 14, an informal reception was held for the members of the union and their friends, at the American Museum of Natural History.

At the closing session of the union, held at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, Mr. Geo. K. Cherrie had a paper on 'The Hoatzin and other South American Birds.' He traced the life history of different species and exhibited specimens of many of them. Mr. Wm. L. Finley spoke of the water birds of southern Oregon, illustrating what he said by many beautiful lantern slides.

The day following adjournment the members of the union visited the aquarium and the New York Zoological Park, and were received and entertained by Directors Hornaday and Townsend, and Curator Beebe.

Following is a list of the papers read at the sessions:

WITMER STONE: 'Some Unpublished Letters of Wilson and some Unstudied Works of Audubon.'

J. A. ALLEN: 'The Evolution of Species through Climatic Conditions.'

ELON H. EATON: 'Summer Birds of the Mt. Marcy Region in the Adirondacks.'

FRANK M. CHAPMAN: 'Pelican Island Revisited.' Illustrated by lantern slides.

B. S. BOWDISH: 'Some Breeding Warblers of Demarest, N. J.' Illustrated by lantern slides.

WILLIAM L. FINLEY: 'Notes on Wing Movements in Bird Flight.' Illustrated by lantern slides.

J. DWIGHT, JR.: 'The Status of Certain Species and Subspecies of North American Birds.'

HERBERT K. JOB: 'Wild-fowl Nurseries of Northwest Canada.' Illustrated by lantern slides.

C. J. PENNOCK: 'Andreas Hesselius, a Pioneer Delaware Ornithologist.'

WITMER STONE: 'The Probability of Error in Bird Migration Records.'

WITMER STONE: 'Some Observations on the Applicability of the Mutation Theory to Birds.'

HENRY OLDYS: 'The Song of the Hermit Tarush.'

FRANK M. CHAPMAN: 'Impressions of English Bird-Life.' Illustrated by lantern slides.

WILLIAM L. BAILY: 'Exhibition of Lantern Slides.'

THOMAS S. ROBERTS: 'A Lapland Longspur Tragedy.' Illustrated by lantern slides.

WILLIAM L. BAILY: 'Similarity of the Birds of the Maine Woods and the Pocono Mountains, Pa.'

WELLS W. COOKE: 'Discontinuous Breeding Ranges.' Illustrated by lantern slides.

ABBOTT H. THAYER: 'The Principles of the Disguising Coloration of Animals.' Illustrated with experiments and slides.

C. W. BEEBE: 'The Collection of Birds in the New York Zoological Park.'

DR. MONTAGUE R. LEVERSON: 'Contribution to the Natural History of the English Cuckoo, with a Review of the Literature on the Subject.'

DR. J. DWIGHT, JR.: 'Plumages and Status of the White-winged Gulls of the Genus *Larus*.'

ARTHUR T. WAYNE: 'Contribution to the Ornithology of South Carolina, Pertaining Chiefly to the Coast Region.'

O. WIDMAN: 'Should Bird Protection Laws and their Enforcement be in the hands of the National Government?'

GEORGE K. CHERRIE: 'The Hoatzin and other South American Birds.' With exhibition of specimens.

WILLIAM L. FINLEY: 'Among the Water Birds of Southern Oregon.' Illustrated by lantern slides.

The next annual meeting will be held in Washington, D. C., commencing November 12, 1906.

JOHN H. SAGE,
Secretary.

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